

Hotline - Cross County Referrals

(Revised 6/19/20)

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Background

The nine counties of the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) Southern Region (Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to:

- Ensure the timely response to Emergency Response (ER) referrals on children,
- Coordinate the efforts between counties on these referrals and
- Further assist staff when there are inquiries regarding referrals to and/or from other jurisdictions.

The **Southern Counties** want to ensure that children reported as abused or neglected are provided timely, appropriate and coordinated Child Welfare Services (CWS) assessment regardless of their location, whether at home or visiting in another jurisdiction.

Procedures outlined in this policy are based on the Southern Counties MOU. If the Hotline receives a referrals for dependent youth placed in California, but not in one of the counties listed above, the Hotline will contact the Child Abuse Hotline in the youth's county of residence (COR) and will request the COR to investigate the referral. If the COR will not agree to accept the referral, the referral will be assigned according the procedures outlined in this policy.

Definitions

For a Non-Dependent child or youth, a **Host County** is defined as **any** county where the referred child is located that is **not** the county of legal residence for the child's primary legal caregiver.

For an Non-Dependent child or youth, the **county of legal residence** is the county where the child's legal parent or guardian resides.

For a Dependent child or youth, the **county of jurisdiction (COJ)** is the county whose court holds jurisdiction of the case.

For a Dependent child or youth, the **county of residence (COR)** is the county where the child's placement is located.

Guiding principles of the MOU

- The safety of the child is first and foremost.
 - The Social Services/CWS Agency where the child is located/found (Host County) is responsible for Emergency Response in-person investigations on all referrals they assess as requiring an “immediate response” (IRS).
 - The Host County, when different from the Social Services/CWS Agency that received the report, **must** give prompt notification to the receiving county on the response status assigned to each referral (IRS, IS-10 day, EO).
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Conflict resolution

The Host County’s internal IRS policies will be followed.

Differences will be resolved through the chain of command.

If...	Then...
the situation cannot be resolved between supervisors	the matter will be elevated to management for a decision.
the Host County’s Emergency Response Program downgrades a response from an IRS to a lesser response	the Host County is to notify the County of Residence’s Hotline regarding this action within 2 hours of the call being accepted by the Host County’s Hotline.

Referrals on non-dependent children

The Hotline worker will determine if the report meets the definition of child abuse by considering Penal Code Section 11165 et. seq., and completing the SDM Hotline Screening Tool to determine the response time. (See: Hotline - Assignment of Referrals.)

NOTE: The table below refers to [Host County](#) and [County of Legal Residence](#) for Non-Dependent children or youth.

Referrals on non-dependent children (cont.)

When a child abuse report is made to the Hotline in one county but the child is physically located in another county, including children placed voluntarily in out-of-home care, the following procedures will be utilized:

If...	Then...
the report does not meet the child abuse definition	<p>...it will be evaluated out.</p> <p>NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hotline SW will notify the Host County of the referral prior to evaluating it out. • When appropriate, referrals to community based services will be given to meet the needs of the family/child.
the Hotline worker/supervisor determines that the report meets the abuse definition and that an immediate in-person investigation is needed...	<p>...the Hotline worker will create a new referral in CWS/CMS.</p> <p>NOTE: The Host County will respond to immediate investigations, however, the Host County may telephone the Hotline supervisor/manager in the county where the child legally resides and offer them the opportunity to respond.</p>
the county of legal residence chooses to respond...	...the Host County will electronically transfer the referral via CWS/CMS following the Electronic Transfer Protocol.
the Hotline worker/supervisor determines that the report meets the abuse definition and the child requires hospitalization and a hospital hold is determined to be necessary...	...the Host County will place a hospital hold or respond on an immediate basis pursuant to their policy and procedures.
the county of legal residence decides that they would prefer to place the hospital hold themselves...	...the county of legal residence will follow through with the investigation and filing of a petition, as deemed appropriate.

**Referrals on non-dependent children
(cont.)**

If...	Then...
the county of legal residence is unable to respond...	...the referral will be assigned to an ER Social Worker in the Host County.
the Hotline worker/supervisor determines that the report meets the abuse definition but an immediate in-person investigation is not needed...	<p>...the Hotline worker will telephone the Hotline in the county of legal residence and the referral will be electronically transferred via CWS/CMS following the Electronic Transfer Protocol.</p> <p>NOTE: In the interest of providing the best service to the children and families we serve, courtesy requests on a case-by-case basis in exceptional circumstances such as driving distance, length of visit in the Host County, etc. may be honored by the Host County.</p>
during the investigation, the ER worker of the Host County determines that the child cannot be safely maintained in his home...	...the child should be placed into Protective Custody.
a petition is filed...	<p>...the matter will remain with the responding County through the Jurisdictional Hearing.</p> <p>After the child is adjudicated, the case will be transferred to the county of legal residence for Disposition using the Inter-County Transfers (ICTs) Protocol.</p>
protective custody is not needed, but additional/voluntary services are warranted...	<p>...the Host county will telephone the county of legal residence regarding its findings and recommendations.</p> <p>The Host County will close the referral and the county of legal residence will make the final determination regarding services.</p>

NOTE: The Inmate Mother's Protocol requires the county of legal residence to pick up newborns born to Inmates in Host Counties. (See: Hotline - Infants Born to Incarcerated/Institutionalized Mothers.)

**Referrals on
dependent children
placed in other
counties**

The Hotline worker will determine if the report meets the definition of child abuse by considering Penal Code Section 11165 et. seq., and completing the SDM Hotline Screening Tool to determine the response time. (See: Hotline - Referrals on Active Cases and Active Referrals.)

NOTE: The table below refers to [County of Jurisdiction](#) and [County of Residence](#) for Dependent children and youth.

If...	Then...
the report does not meet referral screening criteria	it will be evaluated out. NOTE: When appropriate, referrals to community based services will be given to meet the needs of the family/child.
the Hotline worker/supervisor determines that the report meets Hotline - Referral Screening Criteria for an in-person response but does not require an immediate response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the referral will be responded to by the County of Jurisdiction (COJ) over the Dependency.for San Diego County dependent youth, the referral will be assigned to the Open Case Investigations unit.if the case does not meet OCI policy assignment criteria, the referral will be assigned according to policy in the Hotline - Referrals on Active Cases and Active Referrals for any youth with an open case not eligible for assignment to the OCI unit.

**Referrals on
Dependent Children
Placed in Other
Counties (cont.)**

If...	Then...
<p>the Hotline worker/supervisor determines that the report meets Hotline - Referral Screening Criteria and an immediate in-person investigation is needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Hotline worker will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> create a new referral in CWS/CMS. telephone the Hotline supervisor/manager in the COJ the and offer the COJ the opportunity to respond. the Hotline supervisor/manager will determine if the COJ will responds or if they want the COR to respond. for County of San Diego youth,, the referral will be assigned to the OCI unit. if the referral does not meet criteria for assignment to the OCI unit, it will be assigned according to Hotline - Referrals on Active Cases and Active Referrals for any youth with an open case, not eligible for OCI. <p>NOTE: the Hotline PSS/manager can decline responding to the IRS and request the COR to respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if the COJ declines, an ER worker in the COR will be assigned. if applicable, notify Institutions Evaluation Unit (IEU), Complaints Investigations Unit, CCL.
<p>the COJ accepts the referral</p>	<p>the COR will electronically transfer the referral via CWS/CMS following the Electronic Transfer Protocol.</p>
<p>an ER SW in the COR is assigned to conduct an immediate response investigation and assesses that the child is at immediate risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation</p>	<p>remove the child if necessary and contact the COJ for placement instructions.</p>
<p>a child is not removed</p>	<p>an investigation narrative will be sent to the COJ within 48 hours regarding the investigation's findings and outcomes.</p>

CSEC referrals

SWs will continue to refer to procedures listed above to effectively serve CSEC-identified youth from other counties of residence.

When CSE victims are taken into protective custody, CWS will determine the county of residence and proceed according to the following table:

If...	Then...
the county of residence is San Diego	the SW will assess the youth for placement needs and ongoing services.
the youth is from another county and that county has jurisdiction	the SW will follow existing Inter-County Transfers (ICTs) procedure for returning the youth to the county of residence.
a referral is received on a youth in another county	the SW will follow the policies listed above.

For additional information, see CSEC Interagency Protocol and CSEC Response Team Protocol.

Electronic Transfer within CWS/CMS

Electronic Transfer Protocol

The following steps will be followed when transferring referrals electronically:

Step	Action
1	No referrals will be transferred to a receiving County without prior approval via telephone by the receiving County's Hotline Supervisor.
2	Once approval has been received, the sending County will obtain the location of the inbox where the receiving County wants the referral to be transferred.
3	While on the telephone with the receiving County's Hotline Supervisor, the sending County will make the assignment in CWS/CMS immediately.
4	Any referrals showing up in a receiving County's inbox without prior approval by the Hotline Supervisor will be brought to the immediate attention of the Hotline Program Manager for conflict resolution.

Alignment with SET

This policy supports [SET Value 1](#) by recognizing that enhancing safety for children and youth in the home is the top priority for everyone involved and also [SET Value 5](#) by seeking collaborative decisions with other counties while ensuring safety for children.
